

CHANGES IN THE SWORD OF THE LORD HYMNAL

April 4, 2000 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org) - The following interesting information from a pastor friend in Canada is about the changes which were made in the 1989 edition of the Sword of the Lord's *Soul Stirring Hymns and Songs*:

Date: Sat, 01 Apr 2000 18:23:44 -0800
From: Tom Stastny <Thomas_Stastny@telus.net>
To: Independent Baptists Canada
Subject: Sword Song Book

Hello Brethren,

Some of you know that our Church [Beaver Valley Baptist Church, Montrose, British Columbia] was concerned over the changes in the hymnal put out by the Sword of the Lord. We researched all the changes and sent a letter to the Sword asking for their comments. Bro. Smith answered my letter and I am satisfied with his answer. The original letter and Bro. Smith's answer is contained in this letter. I still cannot recommend this song book (1989 version) for purchase but I do look forward to the next!

Pastor Tom Stastny

Date: 22 Feb. 2000
To: Sword of the Lord Publishers
From: Pastor Thomas A. Stastny
Subject: 1989 Soul Stirring Hymns and Songs

To whom it may concern:

My name is Thomas A. Stastny and I Pastor Beaver Valley Baptist Church in Montrose, British Columbia, Canada. In November of 1999 our Church received 90 copies of the 1989 version of *Soul Stirring Hymns and Songs* from a generous Church located in Spokane, Washington. Prior to this time we used the 1972 version, with joy, celebrating the fact that the old songs were still included. The people of this Church (est. 1980) were raised with the old song book. It took us about a week to realize that much was changed in the new book. I realize this fact must have been questioned before since the new book was introduced over ten years ago. I'm not trying to rehash something that is old news but this new book is new (to us) and is causing our congregation problems. I'm asking you to address my questions so that I may in turn answer those of my congregation. This situation is heightened because I have used the song changing techniques of the liberal denominations to show where they are headed. Information I received in the "Sword of the Lord Magazine" and other fundamental resources. I have always promoted yours and other ministries that are associated with the independent Baptist movement to be of the highest integrity.

Here in BC our church is one of the oldest sustained works and as far as I know there are only two that are older. I mention this because the movement is still in its infancy here and many still do not understand the need for an "independent" Church or non-denominational ministries.

Your 1989 version has placed your organization in the eyes of myself and our congregation in this same category as those liberal denominations who feel it is right to change songs for political correctness (#17?) or change a song to fit their current theology. If I do not receive an adequate explanation as to why you have changed the wording in over (53) fifty three songs your organizations integrity is in doubt. In the statistic sighted I realize that we may have missed a change or two, but not many. We found that (30) thirty songs were removed and (1) one added. Not counting the word spelling changes (i.e. "tho" to "through") nor the dropping of "Amen" from a selection, (53) fifty three other songs were changed. In our opinion at least (18) eighteen, of these, changed the writer's intended meaning. Sirs, I understand that you have the right to remove songs

and to delete a verse and add another that the author wrote without notice when you publish a updated hymnal. What I do not understand is the overt changing of words within cherished songs without notification of those revisions. Our supposition can be wrong if the wording contained in the 1972 version was distorted the words; is this the case? Your notice at the beginning of the 1989 version states “we have given the book a ‘face-lift.’ Most of the songs are the same, but they are now more readable and a bit more classic in appearance.” is not nearly sufficient to advise the purchaser of the multitude of changes contained within the book.

I have included an attachment with all the changes we found. An asterisk by the number is to indicate the changes that in our opinion changed the author’s intent. We do not understand how copyrighted songs could be changed nor how Brother Rice’s songs were changed. None of the songs had a “revised by” notice so from that must I assume that the revision editors, Drs. Curtis Hudson and John Reynolds, were responsible for authorizing the changes?

There is one more disturbing fact that needs to be addressed. I say disturbing because the more I reviewed and studied every change found by our people, the more a reoccurring deletion became evident. Several of the changes center around the doctrine of repentance i.e. #245, #288, #318, #444. The 1989 version greatly weakens this doctrine in its overall message (some believe the changes look intentional; I hope your information will remove this skepticism). I understand that some of the old songs are not along mainstream Independent Baptist theology in every phrase. I believe the right thing to do would have been to not use the song or at least give “credit” to the reviser at each changed song. Adequate notice that hymns were changed to fit the publishers’ current theologies would be more in line with the changes. It is my hope that the *Sword* can explain these changes to me so I then can notify my congregation. It is my prayer that our integrity concerns are unwarranted and that your ministry can still be fully trusted.

In Christ,
Bro. Tom Stastny

ATTACHMENT: #1

LISTED BELOW ARE THE CHANGES FOUND WHEN WE COMPARED THE 1972 TO THE 1989 VERSION. The song numbers listed will always be the 1989 first then the 1972 version. The listed changes use the 1972 version as the correct rendition of the song.

1. Song #17, #17 “One Day”
1st verse second phrase “black” is changed to “dark”.
2. * Song #20, #19 “When I See the Blood”
1st verse first phrase “will” changed to “can”, 3rd phrase “Sprinkle your soul with the blood of the Lamb” changed to “all who receive him, need never fear”, forth phrase “and I will pass” changed to “Yes, He will pass”. 2nd verse 2nd phrase “that He will do” changed to “so will He do”, 3rd phrase “wash in the fountain opened for sin” changed to “O sinner hear Him trust in His Word”, 4th phrase “and I will pass” changed to “then He will pass”. 4th verse 3rd phrase “find peace and shelter under the blood” changed to “all who believe are safe from the storm”, 4th phrase “and I will pass” changed to “O He will pass”.
3. Song #42, #43 “My Latest Sun Is Sinking Fast”
2nd verse 2nd phrase “brush the dews” changed to “hear the waves” Chorus 3rd and last phrase “immortal” changed to “eternal”.
4. Song #53, #54 “Beulah Land”
1st verse 1st phrase “corn and wine” changed to “joy divine”.
5. Song #62, #64 “Saved by Grace”
4th verse 3rd phrase “that” changed to “and”, 4th phrase “may” changed to “will”.

6. * Song #66, Back page "At Calvary"

3rd and 4th verse reversed ending the song with man's work instead of God's love and grace.

7. Song #67, #49 "The Pearly White City"

2nd verse "cape" changed to "crepe", Chorus 3rd phrase "an" changed to "a".

8. * Song #70, #80 "Will Jesus Find Us Watching?"

3rd verse 3rd and 4th phrase "if in our hearts there is naught condemns us, we shall have a glorious rest" changed to "if we obey all the Lord commands us, we shall then be truly blest".

9. * Song #80, #84 "Coming Today?"

Chorus "Hail, _____ Hail," changed to "we will", "Jesus may come" changed to "and it may be", Rending the sky _____ wide; _____ high, _____ all, _____" changed to "there'll be a glad reunion".

10. Song #94, #94 "Stand By Me"

4th verse deleted.

11. Song #107, #111 "Praise the Savior"

4th verse deleted.

12. * Song #129, #133 "Rock of Ages"

1st verse 4th phrase "riven" changed to "wounded", 6th phrase "save me from it's guilt and pow'r" changed to "save from wrath and make me pure". 3rd verse deleted 4th verse 4th phrase "see thee on thy judgment-throne" changed to "and behold thee on thy throne".

13. * Song #132, #139 "Never Alone"

1st verse 4th phrase "which almost conquered" changed to "trying to conquer", 2nd verse 3rd phrase "I have" changed to "I feel", 3rd verse 3rd phrase "the cross so heavy" changed to "my cross when heavy", 5th and 6th phrase "tho' all around me is darkness, earthly joys all flown" changed to "my feet entangled with briars, ready to cast me down".

14. Song #138, #151 "The Haven of Rest"

3rd verse 3rd phrase "Blest" changed to "blessed", 4th verse deleted (refers to eternal security and rest).

15. * Song #184, #198 "I Love Thee, My Jesus"

Chorus, 2nd sentence 2nd phrase "In Lightness and burdens I love thee" changed to "today and tomorrow I love Thee".

16. Song #185, #192 "My Savior's Love"

3rd verse deleted (refers to angels comforting Jesus during His betrayal).

17. Song #189, #197 "I Never Will Cease to Love Him"

4th verse deleted (refers to Jesus continues to save and His cleansing power).

18. Song #200, #215 "He's a Wonderful Savior To Me"

4th verse 1st phrase "day by day" changed to "ev'ry day".

19. Song #204, #216 "Songs in the Mountains"

3rd verse 3rd phrase "the rejoicing of sinners, often change into fright" changed to "and the joy of the sinners often changes to fright".

20. Song #206, #208 "Oh! Say, But I'm Glad"

3rd verse 3rd phrase "abiding in Him is a real treat" changed to "abiding in Him: the soul's retreat".

21. Song #219, #232 "My Burdens Rolled Away"

3rd verse 4th phrase “and I know that my burdens could not stay” changed to “and I knew that my burdens rolled away”.

22. Song #242, #259 “It Took a Miracle”

2nd verse 2nd phrase “the wonders of His might, His throne” changed to “the wonder of His might, His pow’r”.

23. * Song #245, #255 “The Old Account Was Settled”

3rd verse deleted (to do with judgment), 4th verse “O sinner seek the Lord, repent of all your sin, For thus He hath commanded if” changed to “O sinner, trust the Lord, be cleansed of all your sin, For thus He hath provided for”.

24. Song #252, #266 “Whiter Than Snow”

2nd verse deleted (refers to sacrifice)

25. Song #268, #278 “What Did He Do?”

2nd verse deleted (refers to Jesus, only.) (Heb.)

26. Song #285, #300 “Into My Heart”

3rd verse 4th phrase “thine” changed to “the” (refers to ownership of eternal day)

27. * Song #288, #301 “I Am Resolved”

verse 4 deleted (refers to repentance after salvation)

28. Song #290, #298 “Let Him In”

1st verse 1st phrase “stranger” changed to “Saviour”.

29. * Song #292, #307 “His Way With Thee”

2nd verse 3rd phrase “need” changed to “can”.

30. * Song #298, #320 “More Like the Master”

2nd verse 3rd phrase “to bring His Kingdom in,” changed to “to rescue souls from sin”.

31. Song #300, #322 “Ashamed of Jesus”

Chorus bass clef 2nd phrase “I never, I never” deleted.

32. Song #312, #311 “Open My Eyes, That I May See”

2nd verse 3rd phrase “will” changed to “shall”.

33. * Song #315, #317 “Take My Life, and Let It Be”

3rd verse “take my lips, and let them be Filled with messages for thee; take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold, not a mite would I withhold.” changed to “Take my silver and my gold, not a mite would I withhold; Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise, Let them flow in ceaseless praise” 4th verse completely changed

34. Song #316, #316 “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

2nd verse “tho no one join me” changed to “tho’ none go with me”.

35. * Song #318, #327 “Give Me Thy Heart”

2nd verse 3rd phrase “turn now from sin and from evil depart” changed to “trust in me only, I’ll never depart”.

36. Song #321, #334 “O To Be Like Thee”

4th verse 2nd phrase “the” “ removed.

37. Song #335, #339 “If Jesus Goes With Me”

3rd verse last phrase “stay” changed to “go”.

38. Song #344, #357 “Fall Fresh On Me”
Fine “Break me, melt me, mold me, fill me” changed to “melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.”
39. * Song #354, #364 “I Am Praying For You”
2nd verse 3rd phrase “He will call me.” changed to “will He call me”. 4th verse 2nd phrase “your” changed to “their”, 4th phrase “will” changed to “may”.
40. Song #366, #381 “The Old Book and the Old Faith”
4th verse deleted (refers to faithful service after salvation)
41. * Song #380, #396 “He Was Not Willing”
2nd verse 2nd phrase “its” changed to “His”.
42. * Song #383, #397 “Make Me A Channel of Blessing”
2nd verse 2nd phrase “for” changed to “by”.
43. Song #384, #398 “In The Service of the King”
3rd verse deleted (refers to His guiding hand)
44. * Song #402, #416 “Our Best”
3rd verse deleted (refers to works to be judged).
45. * Song #409, #426 “The Fight Is On”
2nd verse last phrase “unto the end endure” changed to “forever will endure”. 3rd verse 1st phrase “the Lord” changed to “the fight”.
46. Song #415, #428 “Victory Through Grace”
1st verse 2nd phrase “a” change to “the”.
47. Song #421, #437 “The First Noel”
1st verse 1st line “as” changed to “where”.
48. Song #429, #444 “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”
2nd verse last line “appear” changed to “dwell”.
49. Song 433, #449 “Away in a Manger”
2nd verse last phrase “to watch lullaby” changed to “till morning is nigh”. 3rd verse added.
50. * Song #444, #471 “Almost”
1st and 2nd verses deleted “Almost I trusted in Jesus, Almost I turned from my sin; Almost I yielded completely to the sweet striving within.” “Almost I said, “Jesus, save me”. Almost submitted my will; Almost persuaded to serve Him, but I rejected Him still.”
51. Song #454, #478 “He Will Hold Me Fast”
2nd, 3rd, and 4th verses last phrase in each “must” changed to “can”, “will” changed to “can”.
52. Song #469, #481 “Jesus Bids Us Shine”
4th verse 2nd phrase “bringing those that wander” changed to “bringing in the wand’rer”, 3rd phrase “if” changed to “as”.
53. Song #475, #473 “Jesus, Lover of My Soul”
3rd verse last line “false” changed to “vile”.

DR. SHELTON L. SMITH
President and Editor, Sword of the Lord

Post Office Box 1099 Murfreesboro, TN 37133

March 21, 2000

Pastor Tom Stastny SS 1, Site 11, Comp. 55 Trail, BC VIR IY8 Canada

Dear Brother Stastny:

Your good letter of February 26 is before me, and I'm glad that you have written. I want to respond to your inquiry openly and candidly, and I trust that we shall come to a speedy resolution of the concerns about the hymnal.

First let me say that the 1989 version of the hymnal was done roughly six years before I became the editor. Within a matter of a few months after I became the editor I received a letter similar to yours from a brother in Pennsylvania advising me of the changes he had discovered in the contents of our hymnal.

I checked with a couple of our long-term staff people in the editorial department here and learned that indeed the changes had been made.

That set in motion an immediate effort on my part to produce a brand new hymnal. We have done a major amount of work in that direction, and I hope that sometime early next year we can have the new hymnal ready. It is a major undertaking financially, and had that not been such a major factor, I think we would have already had it done, but we just simply had to slow it down because of the enormous start-up cost in producing a product like that.

In Dr. Hutson's defense, it should be noted that he was somewhat of a hands-off type of administrator and manager. As a result, some of these kinds of things could happen and did happen.

In defense of the person who was primarily responsible for these changes, I'm confident that the intent was good, but the result was not necessarily in line with the intent. I do not believe there was any design to erode the doctrinal issues that we hold precious and dear. For example, the changes that were made on the matter of repentance were an effort to clarify. In some cases the songs in their original form actually communicated a non-scriptural position.

In our upcoming edition, it will be our policy to use the original editions of the hymns, and if there is a doctrinal issue that we believe to be substantive, we will either eliminate that hymn or, if we change it, we will make a notation to indicate that it has been revised.

Indeed the "song-changing techniques of the liberal denominations" have often been a precursor of things to come. I have noted the same thing often.

However, in reference to the changes in the *Sword* hymnal, that is far from the case. I repeat that I believe the people responsible were well intentioned, and it was an intent to produce scriptural integrity, but the way in which it was done left us suspect and vulnerable.

One other thing that should be noted (and I think this was the case in a few of these items) there are two and sometimes more versions of some of these songs that have become popularized, and sometimes that adds to the confusion.

But whatever the case, I want to assure you that we are working toward getting a new hymnal produced which will serve the needs in the ministry of our fundamental, independent, soul-winning, separated Baptist churches.

I regret that this 1989 edition has created a problem for you and your ministry, and I am eager for the opportunity to help solve that and resolve it. If you will be patient with us until we get this new hymnal produced, we will work this out so you and your church receive full value for what you

have invested, and we will do everything conceivable and possible to restore your confidence in the integrity of the ministry of the Sword of the Lord.

Brother Stastny, again let me thank you for your letter, and let me thank you for giving us the opportunity to get this situation corrected, and at the same time I trust that we will be able to serve you and your church throughout the years to come. If there is ever a question at any time, be assured your inquiry will always be welcome.

This organization, like any other, can make a mistake here and there, but I assure you that when we understand that we have made a mistake, we will do the right thing, and we will correct it. We are committed to a lifestyle of biblical integrity, and we will do no other.

God bless you, and thank you for getting in touch. Do stay in touch.

With best wishes, your friend,

Dr. Shelton L. Smith

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